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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Assistant Secretary

November 3, 1945

A-R Mr. Russell

OPERATIONS OF THE OSS IN REGARD TO LATIN AMERICA

I am informed that ARA has made only three or four requests of OSS for information or reports. Having its own analysis section, ARA requested the help of the OSS only in response to repeated proffers of assistance made by that organization, which explained that it had personnel available for such work. Because it was short-handed ARA availed itself of these offers on certain special emergency projects in order to expedite its work. *

Pursuant to an early decision, OSS has never had field representatives in Latin America; therefore it has had to rely principally upon published material or such material as the State Department or other Government agencies made available to it.

No action by ARA has been induced or influenced by the afore-mentioned facilities supplied by OSS.

It is my conviction that the establishment of a large organization such as appears to be contemplated would be tantamount to duplicating the work which ARA was established to perform (See page X-1 of Dept. Order 1301) and for which it is far better equipped since most of our officers have had actual field experience and all of them are acquainted with the reporting sources and, therefore, can far better evaluate the information received than can the proposed Office of Intelligence and Research.

To have such duplication of effort can only result in confusion for all concerned.

So long as the much needed and competent personnel is made available to ARA (conceivably a few of the OSS experts could be absorbed by ARA Research and Analysis Section) and a system is established whereby information respecting Latin America but emanating elsewhere in the world is promptly made available to this office, the need for the proposed new division is not evident.

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What we do need is a competent counter-espionage organization, such as has been supplied during the war by the FBI operating at all times under the direction of the Department and our respective diplomatic missions. This is a pressing problem since FBI plans a radical reduction or elimination of its activities by December 31.

Spruille Braden

* With reference to that part of the "Intelligence and Research Report" on the "Functions of Latin America Division," the following is pertinent:

(1) I can find no record of any request by ARA for "political studies of current developments and trends in Latin America" listed as point (a) under assignments now in progress in the Latin American section of OSS. Political studies are in any case already a function of ARA.

(2) ARA did request the series of basic country studies referred to in point (c), this request having been made more than two years ago when the OSS volunteered its services in any research which the Department would find helpful. So far a basic study on only one country has been received in response to our request.

(3) Also, about two years ago, the Department suggested to OSS that it might make a report on transportation and communication projects affecting the area of Bolivia and Paraguay. So far as I can determine this report was never completed.

(4) In connection with special work in assembling and reviewing information on the Argentine question, last January the Department asked the OSS to assist in regard to certain problems, notably the pro-Nazi press in Argentina, of which that agency had complete files. At the present time the Department is also using the services of some of the personnel from the Latin American section for an emergency project of similar character. Here again it should be noted that ARA lacks personnel to perform these special rush jobs.

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(5) Other reports which the OSS has given to the State Department have been entirely voluntary. Although they have been read by desk officers with the same interest that would be attached to any report on conditions in Latin America, they are not considered to have contributed information which was not already available to the Department or to have affected the formulation of departmental policy.

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